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wholly barren land or of range land with arboreous shrubs. Of the balance probably only about 60,000 hectares can be characterized as more or less dense forest.

The mission has already recommended an aerial survey of the forest areas in the province of Latakia. This would be a first step in the appraisal of existing resources and the delimitation and protection of forest reserves. An FAO specialist has for some time been advising the government on a forestry program. The mission can only recommend that action along the lines which he has proposed be undertaken as soon as possible. Any program should focus in the first instance on safeguarding forest areas against uncontrolled cutting, shifting cultivation, excessive grazing, fire, insects, erosion and other hazards which have inflicted considerable damage in the past. A more effective forestry law which was drafted by a committee in 1953 should be promptly enacted for this purpose. To protect the forests and supervise their exploitation a field service of four foresters and 42 rangers should be built up by 1960. The necessary forest rangers will have to be trained either at a secondary forestry school which may be established in cooperation with the FAO to serve the countries in the Near East or at a special training school which might be added to the existing Bugua Agricultural School near Latakia. Within the Ministry of Agriculture a staff of five foresters and 10 rangers should be available to direct the necessary survey, research and reforestation work; and two foresters will be necessary to supervise forest nurseries.

Once adequate protection of forests has been established, reforestation can proceed. The three existing nurseries and two new ones recently established should be able to produce about 3 million seedlings yearly. The mission considers it important, however, that government nurseries be also in a position to supply trees for planting in farming areas. Although such trees as poplars are extensively grown as cash crops in certain irrigated regions, most farming areas are virtually treeless. The planting of a belt of trees around new village settlements should be an integral part of any settlement program. Farmers should be assisted to establish their own wood lots and to plant trees along roads. This would help to meet the acute shortage of timber for fuel and building, provide some protection against wind and make settlements more attractive. The mission therefore suggests that five additional small nurseries be established, particularly in the provinces of Jezireh and Euphrates, to supply trees for such purposes.

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To meet the cost of this program over the next five or six years the mission suggests that additional funds of £S 500,000 be made available to the forestry service.

Settlement of State Domain

The employment of state land for the establishment of peasant proprietors is already declared government policy. Article 22 of the 1950 constitution stipulates that "The State shall distribute among landless peasants, at a small cost to be paid by instalments, sufficient land to secure their livelihood"; and decrees issued by the Minister of Agriculture on November 1, 1952 and January 15, 1953, provide for the sale of government land in parcels of 50 or 10 hectares, depending on whether the land is irrigated.

The immediate need for settlement arises from certain localized population pressures and from the growing desire of the Bedouins to adopt agriculture. Population pressures are most marked in the provinces of Latakia and Djebel Druze where, according to rough estimates, the amount of cultivated land available per person is less than 50% and a little over 60% respectively, of the average for Syria as a whole. The reclaimed land in the Ghab and the Roudj should help in particular to relieve the overcrowding among the agricultural population of the Alaouit mountains in Latakia. According to the Ministry of the Interior, the Bedouins number about 150,000, half of whom, however, are said already to be engaged in some form of settled agriculture. Many Bedouins apparently tend to squat on unoccupied land which they cultivate more or less sporadically and often with extremely poor results. For them the availability of good land in such a province as the Jezireh is of paramount concern.

The mission has given special attention to the problems involved in settling reclaimed and irrigated areas and of undertaking certain experimental settlements in dry-farming regions. The government has not yet drawn up settlement plans for the Ghab and the Roudj, although this task is becoming urgent, particularly for the latter. For the settlement of the Bedouins certain initial steps have been taken. The government has set aside and divided into allotments 100,000 hectares in the Radd area of the Jezireh and is in the process of dividing another area of 50,000 hectares in the same province. Part of the first area has already been allocated to Bedouins but is being leased to large operators for three years in order to